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Ambassador Kirkpatrick

Statement on Israeli Raid Before Security Council

June 19, 1981

United States Department of State
Bureau of Public Affairs
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Following is a statement by Ambassador Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations, on June 19, 1981, during the U.N. Security Council consideration of measures to be taken following the Israeli raid on Iraqi nuclear facilities.

I wish to thank the Ambassador from Mexico, who has acquitted himself with such distinction in carrying out the difficult responsibilities, showing so keen a sense of the importance which the international community attaches to these deliberations. May I also congratulate the distinguished Ambassador from Japan, who last month earned the esteem of the entire Council by managing our affairs with singular deftness.

The issue before the Security Council in the past week—Israel's attack upon the Iraqi nuclear reactor—raises profound and troubling questions that will be with us long after the conclusion of these meetings. The Middle East, as one prominent American observed last week, "provides combustible matter for international conflagration akin to the Balkans prior to World War I," a circumstance made all the more dangerous today by the possibility that nuclear weapons could be employed in a future conflict.

The area that stretches from Southwest Asia across the Fertile Crescent and Persian Gulf to the Atlantic Ocean, is, as we all know, torn not only by tension and division but also by deeply rooted, tenacious hostilities that erupt repeatedly into violence. In the past 2 years alone, one country in the area, Afghanistan, has been brutally invaded and occupied but not pacified. Afghan freedom fighters continue their determined struggle for their country's independence. Iraq and Iran are locked in a bitter war. And with shocking violence, Libya, whose principal exports to the world are oil and terror, invaded and now occupies Chad. Lebanon has its territory and its sovereignty violated almost routinely by neighboring nations. Other governments in the area have, during the same brief period, been the object of violent attacks and terrorism. Now comes Israel's destruction of the Iraqi nuclear facility. Each of these acts of violence undermines the stability and well-being of the area. Each gravely jeopardizes the peace and security of the entire area. The danger of war and anarchy in this vital strategic region threatens global peace and presents this Council with a grave challenge.

My government's commitment to a just and enduring peace in the Middle East is well-known. We have given our full support to efforts by the Secretary General to resolve the war between Iran and Iraq. Our abhorrence of the Soviet Union's invasion and continued occupation of Afghanistan—against the will of the entire Afghan people—requires no elaboration on this occasion. For weeks, our special representative Philip Habib has been in the area conducting talks which we still hope may help to end the hostilities in Lebanon and head off a conflict between Israel and Syria. Not least, we have been engaged in intensive efforts to assist in the implementation of the Egyptian-Israeli treaty, efforts that have already strengthened the forces for peace in the Middle East and will, we believe, lead ultimately to a comprehensive peace settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict in accordance with Resolutions 242 and 338 of the Security Council.

As in the past, U.S. policies in the Middle East aim above all at making the independence and freedom of people in the area more secure and their daily lives less dangerous. We seek the security of all the nations and peoples of the region.

- The security of all nations to know that a neighbor is not seeking technology for purposes of destruction.
- The security of all people to know they can live their lives in the absence of fear of attack and do not daily see their existence threatened or questioned.
- The security of all people displaced by war, violence, and terrorism.

The instability that has become the hallmark and history of the Middle East may serve the interests of some on this Council; it does not serve our interests; it does not serve the interests of our friends, be they Israeli or Arab.

We believe, to the contrary, that the peace and security of all the nations in the region are bound up with the peace and security of the area.

It is precisely because of my government's deep involvement in efforts to promote peace in the Middle East that we were shocked by the Israeli air strike on the Iraqi nuclear facility and promptly condemned this action, which we believe both reflected and exacerbated deeper antagonisms in the region which, if not ameliorated, will continue to lead to outbreaks of violence.

However, although my government has condemned Israel's act, we know it is necessary to take into account the

of this action as well as its consequences. The truth demands nothing less. As my President, Ronald Reagan, asserted in his press conference:

". . . I do think that one has to recognize that Israel had reason for concern in view of the past history of Iraq, which has never signed a cease-fire or recognized Israel as a nation, has never joined in any peace effort for that . . . . it does not even recognize the existence of Israel as a country.

With respect to Israel's attack on the Iraqi nuclear reactor, President Reagan said: ". . . Israel might have sincerely believed it was a defensive move."

The strength of U.S. ties and commitment to Israel is well known to the members of this Council. Israel is an important and valued ally. The warmth of the human relationship between our peoples is widely understood. Nothing has happened that in any way alters the strength of our commitment or the warmth of our feelings. We in the Reagan Administration are proud to call Israel a friend and ally.

Nonetheless we believe the means Israel chose to quiet its fears about the purposes of Iraq's nuclear program have hurt and not helped the peace and security of the area. In my government's view, diplomatic means available to Israel had not been exhausted, and the Israeli action has damaged the regional confidence that is essential for the peace process to go forward. All of us with an interest in peace, freedom, and national independence have a high stake in that process. Israel's stake is highest of all.

My government is committed to working with the Security Council to remove the obstacles to peace. We made clear from the outset that the United States will support reasonable actions by this body which might be likely to contribute to the pacification of the region. We also made clear that my government would approve no decision that harmed Israel's basic interests, was unfairly punitive, or created new obstacles to a just and lasting peace.

The United States has long been deeply concerned about the dangers of nuclear proliferation. We believe that all nations should adhere to the Non-proliferation Treaty. It is well known that we support the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and will cooperate in any reasonable effort to strengthen it.

We desire to emphasize, however, that security from nuclear attack and annihilation will depend ultimately less on treaties signed than on the construction of stable regional order. Yes, Israel should be condemned; yes, the IAEA should be strengthened and respected by all nations. And yes, too, Israel's neighbors should recognize its right to exist and enter into negotiations with it to resolve their differences.

The challenge before this Council was to exercise at least the same degree of restraint and wisdom that we demand of the parties directly involved in Middle East tensions. Inflammatory charges, such as the Soviet statement that the United States somehow encouraged the raid or that we knew of the raid beforehand, are false and malicious. One can speculate about whose interest is served by such innuendo. Certainly the spirit of truth, restraint, or peace is not served by such innuendo. Certainly the process of peace is not forwarded.

Throughout the negotiations of the last days, my government had sought only to move us closer to the day when genuine peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors will become a reality. We have searched for a reasonable outcome of the negotiations in the Security Council, one which would protect the vital interests of all parties, and damage the vital interests of none, which would ameliorate rather than exacerbate the dangerous passions and division of the area. In that search we were aided by the cooperative spirit, restrained positions, and good faith of the Iraqi Foreign Minister Sa'dun Hammadi. We sincerely believe the results will move that turbulent area a bit closer to the time when all the states in the region have the opportunity to turn their energies and resources from war to peace, from armaments to development, from anxiety and fear to confidence and well-being.■

SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION S/RES/487, JUNE 19, 1981*

The Security Council,

Having considered the agenda contained in document/agenda/2280,

Having noted the contents of the telegramme dated 8 June 1981 from the Foreign Minister of Iraq,

Having heard the statements made to the Council on the subject at its 2280th through 2288th meetings;

Taking note of the statement made by the Director General of IAEA to the Agency's Board of Governors on the subject on 9 June 1981, and his statement to the Council at its 2288th meeting on 19 June 1981,

Further taking note of the resolution adopted by the Board of Governors of the IAEA on 12 June 1981 on the "military attack on the Iraq nuclear research centre and its implications for the agency",

Fully aware of the fact that Iraq has been a party to the Non-proliferation Treaty since it came into force in 1970, that in accordance with that treaty Iraq has accepted IAEA safeguards on all its nuclear activities, and that the agency has testified that these safeguards have been satisfactorily applied to date,

Noting furthermore that Israel has not adhered to the NPT,

Deeply concerned about the danger to international peace and security created by the premeditated Israeli air attack on Iraqi nuclear installations on 7 June 1981, which could at any time explode the situation in the area with grave consequences for the vital interests of all states,

Considering that, under the terms of Article 2, Paragraph 4 of the United Nations Charter: "All members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations",

1. Strongly condemns the military attack by Israel in clear violation of the United Nations Charter and the norms of international conduct;

2. Calls upon Israel to refrain in the future from any such acts of threats thereof;

3. Further considers that the said attack constitutes a serious threat to the entire IAEA safeguards regime which is the foundation of the NPT;

4. Fully recognizes the inalienable sovereign right of Iraq, and all other states, especially the developing countries, to establish programmes of technological and nuclear development to develop their economy and industry for peaceful purposes in accordance with their present and future needs and consistent with the internationally accepted objectives of preventing nuclear weapons proliferation;

5. Calls upon Israel urgently to place its nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards;

6. Considers that Iraq is entitled to appropriate redress for the destruction it has suffered, responsibility for which has been acknowledged by Israel;

7. Requests the Secretary General to keep the Security Council regularly informed of the implementation of this resolution.

*The 15 members of the Security Council unanimously adopted S/RES/487 on June 19, 1981.

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